on which raids were conducted and additional tax amount was collected, pending with the Income Tax Department for several years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of pending group cases in which payment of reward amount has not been made finally even after lapse of five years from the date of conduction of raids on the basis of information given by the informers;

(d) the rules regarding the time-limit for making payment of reward amount to informers; and

(e) the action proposed to be taken by the Government for expeditious disbursement of reward amount?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yesm Sir. there are some cases of final rewards which are pending with I.T. Department for several years.

(b) to (e) Interim reward has been paid to all eligible informers. As per existing rules, final reward is to be given only on finalisation of all proceedings, including assessments and appeals etc. and after the additional taxes attributable to the information furnished by the informer have been realised. Many of the assessments pertaining to the aforesaid cases have not yet become final and/or taxes not recovered. Therefore, there cannot be any definite time frame for the disbursal of such reward. However, the Central Board of Direct Taxes has, from time to time, issued instructions to subordinate authorities for early disposal of such assessments and quick disbursal of reward to informants.

Jute Prices

1770. SHRIMATI SARADA TADIPARTHI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of jute have sharply fallen in the recent weeks and adversely affected thereby lakhs of jute growers in the country;

(b) whether the Jute Corporation of India has made no procurement of jute during the current year and the Union Government's order for use of jute bags are not being implemented effectively;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken/being taken to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir. Prices of raw jute have started falling sharply in the recent weeks due mainly to expected huge surplus of supply over requirement following harvesting of a bumper crop in the current season and availability of large carry over stock from 1996-97 season.

(b) to (d) In order to arrest the declining trend in prices of raw jute in the current season and to ensure implementation of Jute Packaging Order the following measures have been taken:

(a) Funds have been released by the Ministry of Textiles to JCI to start up MSP operations;

(b) Reserve Bank of India have also authorised JCI on enhanced credit limit valid upto July, 1997.

(c) Government of India have also sanctioned a Bank Guarantee for securing required credit from the Banks.

(d) Further budgetary support will be given to JCI shortly to enhance the activities relating to MSP operations.

(e) Ministry of Textiles has already written to the Ministry of Food and the Ministry of Fertilisers and Chemicals to instruct the FCI and other Fertiliser Companies respectively to place the orders for jute bags. It is hoped that the demand for jute bags will certainly go up as the bulk purchasers have started placing the orders.

(f) Orders under clause 9 A of the Jute (Licensing & Control) Order, 1961 have been issued by the Jute Commissioner on 14.7.1997 directing jute mills to step up purchases of raw jute. Strict watch is being kept over observance of this directive.

(g) Compulsory linkage with purchase of raw jute from JCI against B.Twill allocation to jute mills from August, '97 onwards is under consideration so as to enable JCI to maximise purchases by simultaneous disposal to mills.

(h) In order to tone up depressed gunny market, foodgrains procuring agencies have, on Jute Commissioner's request, placed sizable order for jute bags for next Kharif packaging for delivery during July, 1997 to October, '97 which is expected to have a stabilising effect on raw jute prices.

(i) Prices situation is being monitored closely.

(j) Jute Commissioner has been directed to ensure strict implementation of the Reservation Order for jute Packaging.

[Translation]

Exports From Bihar

1771. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a comprehensive study and survey has been made or proposed to be made to explore the export potential from Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of agricultural and mineral export potential therein; and

(d) the steps being taken for achieving optimum development of the State by promoting maximum export from the State?